

## Message Text

SECRET

PAGE 01 BELGRA 04316 01 OF 02 271753Z  
ACTION SS-25

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 SSO-00 /026 W  
-----101065 271800Z /53

O 271650Z JUN 77  
FM AMEMBASSY BELGRADE  
TO SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 1214

S E C R E T SECTION 1 OF 2 BELGRADE 4316

EXDIS

E.O. 11652: GDS  
TAGS: MASS YO ET US  
SUBJECT: ALLEGED YUGOSLAV TRANSFER OF M-47 TANKS TO ETHIOPIA--  
WHY AND WHITHER

REF: BELGRADE 4263

FOR VEST AND GELB FROM EAGLEBURGER

1. IT MAY BE USEFUL, WHILE WE AWAIT MINIC'S RESPONSE TO  
DEMARCHÉ RE M-47S, TO THINK A BIT ABOUT BOTH THE WHY OF  
THE DIVERSION AND THE POTENTIAL CONSEQUENCES OF THAT ACT  
ON U.S.-YUGOSLAV RELATIONS. THIS ATTEMPT TO EXAMINE THOSE  
TWO QUESTIONS FOLLOWS ON SEVERAL CONVERSATIONS WITH THE  
DCM AND THE POLCOUNS, BOTH OF WHOM ARE, AS YOU KNOW,  
ASTUTE OBSERVERS OF THE YUGOSLAV SCENE.

2. AS TO THE WHY, THERE ARE AT LEAST THREE POSSIBLE  
EXPLANATIONS:

A. FIRST, AND MOST LIKELY, IS THAT YUGOSLAV  
ENTHUSIASM FOR A SOCIALIST BROTHER GOT THE BEST OF THEM.  
THE NEW ETHIOPIAN GOVERNMENT MAY WELL HAVE SEEMED TO  
TITO (I SEE NO POSSIBILITY THAT HE WAS NOT PERSONALLY  
INVOLVED) AND THE COTERIE AROUND HIM TO BE UNIQUELY

SECRET

SECRET

PAGE 02 BELGRA 04316 01 OF 02 271753Z

DESERVING OF HELP. IT IS A "PROGRESSIVE" BUNCH  
BY YUGOSLAV STANDARDS; IT IS HARD PRESSED ON ALL  
SIDES, AS WELL AS FROM WITHIN, YET A MODICUM OF  
MILITARY SUPPORT (E.G., OUTMODED TANKS) MIGHT WELL MAKE  
THE DIFFERENCE IN SO FLUID A SITUATION; THE PROVISION  
OF SUCH ASSISTANCE TO A "NON-ALIGNED" COUNTRY SUCH AS  
ETHIOPIA GIVES THE GOY AN OPPORTUNITY BOTH TO

SUPPLEMENT SOVIET AID AND AT THE SAME TIME ESTABLISH THE BASIS FOR NON-SOVIET "PROGRESSIVE" INFLUENCE.

B. THE SECOND POSSIBILITY HAS TO DO MORE DIRECTLY WITH US. THE GOY OFFER TO MAKE THE TANKS AVAILABLE TO ETHIOPIA PROBABLY WAS MADE DURING THE ETHIOPIAN VICE PRESIDENT'S VISIT HERE IN FEBRUARY. VICE PRESIDENT MONDALE'S VISIT AND THE RESULTANT WARMING OF RELATIONS HAD NOT YET TAKEN PLACE; KRSKO WAS A POINT OF MAJOR DIFFERENCE BETWEEN US (I AM TOLD THE GOY LOOKED UPON OUR DELAYS ON THE REACTOR DEAL AS "BLACKMAIL" AND A VIOLATION OF AN AGREEMENT BETWEEN US; THE YUGOSLAVS WERE PESSIMISTIC ABOUT THE WILLINGNESS OF THE WEST IN GENERAL AND THE US IN PARTICULAR TO SELL THEM ARMS. THUS, GIVEN THEIR OBLIGATION TO A NON-ALIGNED AND SOCIALIST STATE, THEIR IRRITATION WITH US, AND AN ESTIMATE THAT THEY HAD LITTLE TO LOSE IN THE AREA MOST DIRECTLY AFFECTED; I.E., MILITARY SALES, THE YUGOSLAVS MAY HAVE DECIDED TO SHIP THE TANKS, LITTLE CARING IF THEY WERE CAUGHT.

C. THE LEAST LIKELY POSSIBILITY IS THAT "CERTAIN CIRCLES" IN THE GOY -- PEOPLE WHO WOULD LIKE TO SEE US-YUGOSLAV RELATIONS DISRUPTED -- PUSHED THE TRANSFER IN THE HOPE THAT IT WOULD BE FOUND OUT.

SECRET

SECRET

PAGE 03 BELGRA 04316 01 OF 02 271753Z

3. I HAVE NOT YET REACHED A STATE OF PARANOIA SUFFICIENT TO PUT MUCH CREDENCE IN THE THIRD ALTERNATIVE. RATHER, I AM INCLINED TO PUT MY MONEY ON THE FIRST OF THE REASONS OUTLINED ABOVE. BUT I DO NOT EXCLUDE THE POSSIBILITY THAT KRSKO AND THE GENERAL STATE OF OUR MILITARY RELATIONSHIP MAY ALSO HAVE PLAYED A PART. THE TWO REASONS ARE BY NO MEANS MUTUALLY EXCLUSIVE, SO BOTH MAY HAVE PLAYED A PART.

4. THE YUGOSLAV BREACH OF FAITH IS A SERIOUS ONE, NO MATTER WHAT ITS MOTIVATION. THE QUESTION THE USG MUST NOW BEGIN TO FACE IS NOT WHETHER IT REACTS BUT HOW. THE LAW IS CLEAR, SO FAR AS IT GOES, AND MUST BE OBEYED. BUT THE QUESTION WILL BE -- UNLESS I MISS MY GUESS-- WHAT WE SHOULD DO IN ADDITION TO THE STEPS IMPOSED BY LAW. I AM FRANK TO SAY THAT I AM NOT SURE, AND WOULD LIKE TO RESERVE JUDGEMENT UNTIL WE SEE WHAT ANSWER WE GET AS A RESULT OF MY MEETING WITH MINIC.

SECRET

NNN

SECRET

PAGE 01 BELGRA 04316 02 OF 02 271807Z  
ACTION SS-25

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 SSO-00 /026 W  
-----101204 271810Z /53

O 271650Z JUN 77  
FM AMEMBASSY BELGRADE  
TO SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 1215

S E C R E T SECTION 2 OF 2 BELGRADE 4316

EXDIS

IN ANY EVENT, I HOPE THE DEPARTMENT AND THIS EMBASSY  
WILL BE ABLE TO "REASON TOGETHER" A BIT BEFORE  
ANY FINAL DECISIONS ARE TAKEN.

5. ON THE ASSUMPTION THAT WE WILL HAVE A CHANCE TO  
THINK JOINTLY ABOUT OUR TACTICS, LET ME TALK BRIEFLY  
ABOUT SOME OF THE STRATEGIC CONSIDERATIONS THAT OUGHT  
TO BE KEPT IN THE BACK OF OUR MINDS THROUGHOUT.

6. THIS CASE UNDERLINES THE COMPLEXITY OF OUR  
RELATIONSHIP -- A MIXTURE OF CONFLICTING AND COMMON  
CONCERNS. ON THE ONE HAND, GOY DOES MUCH IN THE  
THIRD WORLD, THE UN AND ELSEWHERE THAT CONFLICTS  
WITH OUR POLICY AND UNDERMINES OUR INTERESTS. IN  
THIS INSTANCE THEIR NON-ALIGNED COMPULSIONS HAVE APPARENTLY  
LED THEM TO A SERIOUS VIOLATION OF A BILATERAL  
AGREEMENT. BUT OUR LONG-TERM INTERESTS REMAIN.  
YUGOSLAVIA SITS ASTRIDE THE SENSITIVE AND STRATEGIC  
DIVIDING LINE BETWEEN EAST AND WEST; ITS SECURITY AND  
INDEPENDENCE ARE IMPORTANT TO US; ITS EXAMPLE REMAINS  
IMPORTANT TO THE REST OF EASTERN EUROPE AND, AS THE  
CURRENT DEBATE OVER "EUROCOMMUNISM" DEMONSTRATES,  
IT IS HARDLY A "RUNNING DOG" FOR MOSCOW.

7. ALL OF THESE ATTRIBUTES ARE UNLIKELY TO BE MUCH  
SECRET

SECRET

PAGE 02 BELGRA 04316 02 OF 02 271807Z

AFFECTED BY WHATEVER WE DO IN REACTION TO THE M-47  
TRANSFER. BUT BECAUSE THEY ARE SO IMPORTANT TO US,

THESE CONSIDERATIONS WILL -- OR SHOULD -- IMPOSE LIMITS ON HOW FAR WE PUSH OUR DIFFERENCES. SOONER OR LATER, AS ALWAYS IN THE HISTORY OF OUR POST-1948 RELATIONSHIP WITH YUGOSLAVIA, WE HAVE COME TO RECOGNIZE THE RELEVANCE OF THIS COUNTRY TO OUR LONG-TERM INTERESTS, AND HAVE ACCOMMODATED TO THAT FACT. THIS IS NOT TO SAY THAT WE SHOULD NOT REACT TO THE GOY'S VIOLATION OF A BILATERAL AGREEMENT SOLEMNLY ENTERED INTO; WE SHOULD. IT IS TO SAY THAT WE OUGHT NOT OVERREACT AND THEN DISCOVER SIX MONTHS OR A YEAR LATER THAT WE MUST PAINFULLY TRY TO CLAW OUR WAY BACK TO A SITUATION MORE OR LESS RESEMBLING THE STATUS QUO ANTE.

8. THE IMMEDIATE TRAGEDY OF THIS ACT OF YUGOSLAV IRRESPONSIBILITY IS THAT IT PROBABLY KNOCKS ANY IMMEDIATE HOPE OF IMPROVED COOPERATION (INCLUDING A MODEST INCREASE IN ARMS SALES) BETWEEN THE MILITARY ESTABLISHMENTS OF OUR TWO COUNTRIES INTO A COCKED HAT. AND YET THE FACT IS THAT THE YUGOSLAV MILITARY AND THE LEAGUE OF COMMUNISTS WILL PROBABLY BE THE KEY FORCES IN DETERMINING THE CHARACTER OF POST-TITO YUGOSLAVIA. WITH THE FORMER WE HAVE VIRTUALLY NO CONTACT; WITH THE LATTER LITTLE MORE. BUT IN BOTH CASES THERE IS AT LEAST SOME REASON TO THINK THAT THINGS MAY BE CHANGING. VICE PRESIDENT MONDALE'S TRIP CERTAINLY SUBSEQUENT TO THE M-47 TRANSFER DECISION) WAS A REAL BREAK FROM THE RATHER ICY PERIOD OF THE RECENT PAST. JUST LAST WEEK STANE DOLANC TOLD ME THAT THE PARTY WAS NOW PREPARED TO PROCEED WITH VISITS TO THE UNITED STATES. AND, AS YOU KNOW, TITO SPECIFICALLY URGED THE VICE SECRET

SECRET

PAGE 03 BELGRA 04316 02 OF 02 271807Z

PRESIDENT -- AS HE HAS THE FRG, THE FRENCH, THE ITALIANS AND THE UK-- TO EXPEND ARMS SALES (THEREBY DECREASING PRESENT YUGOSLAV DEPENDENCE ON THE USSR). I BELIEVED BEFORE I LEFT WASHINGTON, AND BELIEVE EVEN MORE STRONGLY NOW, THAT A MODERATE EXPANSION OF OUR MILITARY SALES PROGRAM (AND A MAJOR REVAMPING OF THE MECHANISM) IS IN OUR INTERESTS -- PROVIDED THE GOY IS PREPARED IN RETURN TO FACILITATE SUBSTANTIALLY MORE OPEN AND DIRECT CONTACTS WITH THE YUGOSLAV MILITARY ESTABLISHMENT. SUCH A STEP MAY NOT -- IN THE LIGHT OF RECENT EVENTS -- NOW BE POSSIBLE; CERTAINLY WE CANNOT PROCEED AS IF NOTHING HAD HAPPENED. BUT WHATEVER WE DO OUGHT TO BE STRUCTURED IN SUCH A WAY THAT OUR OPTIONS ARE NOT FORECLOSED. OTHERWISE WE STAND TO LOSE AS MUCH AS THE YUGOSLAVS, FOR (DESPITE ALL APPEARANCES TO THE CONTRARY)TITO CAN'T LIVE FOREVER. AND WHEN HE GOES WE WILL WANT TO BE IN A

POSITION TO INFLUENCE IN EVERY WAY WE CAN THOSE FORCES  
IN THIS COUNTRY THAT CAN PROVIDE BOTH STABILITY AND HOPE  
FOR A MORE LIBERAL REGIME.  
EAGLEBURGER

SECRET

NNN

## Message Attributes

**Automatic Decaptioning:** Z  
**Capture Date:** 01-Jan-1994 12:00:00 am  
**Channel Indicators:** n/a  
**Current Classification:** UNCLASSIFIED  
**Concepts:** DIPLOMATIC PROTESTS, MILITARY EQUIPMENT LOANS, TANKS (COMBAT VEHICLES), MILITARY ASSISTANCE PROGRAMS  
**Control Number:** n/a  
**Copy:** SINGLE  
**Sent Date:** 27-Jun-1977 12:00:00 am  
**Decaption Date:** 22 May 2009  
**Decaption Note:** 25 YEAR REVIEW  
**Disposition Action:** RELEASED  
**Disposition Approved on Date:**  
**Disposition Case Number:** n/a  
**Disposition Comment:** 25 YEAR REVIEW  
**Disposition Date:** 22 May 2009  
**Disposition Event:**  
**Disposition History:** n/a  
**Disposition Reason:**  
**Disposition Remarks:**  
**Document Number:** 1977BELGRA04316  
**Document Source:** CORE  
**Document Unique ID:** 00  
**Drafter:** n/a  
**Enclosure:** n/a  
**Executive Order:** GS  
**Errors:** N/A  
**Expiration:**  
**Film Number:** D770229-0316  
**Format:** TEL  
**From:** BELGRADE  
**Handling Restrictions:**  
**Image Path:**  
**ISecure:** 1  
**Legacy Key:** link1977/newtext/t19770615/aaaaanct.tel  
**Line Count:** 228  
**Litigation Code IDs:**  
**Litigation Codes:**  
**Litigation History:**  
**Locator:** TEXT ON-LINE, ON MICROFILM  
**Message ID:** 72ba7e76-c288-dd11-92da-001cc4696bcc  
**Office:** ACTION SS  
**Original Classification:** SECRET  
**Original Handling Restrictions:** EXDIS  
**Original Previous Classification:** n/a  
**Original Previous Handling Restrictions:** n/a  
**Page Count:** 5  
**Previous Channel Indicators:** n/a  
**Previous Classification:** SECRET  
**Previous Handling Restrictions:** EXDIS  
**Reference:** 77 BELGRADE 4263  
**Retention:** 0  
**Review Action:** RELEASED, APPROVED  
**Review Content Flags:**  
**Review Date:** 17-Mar-2005 12:00:00 am  
**Review Event:**  
**Review Exemptions:** n/a  
**Review Media Identifier:**  
**Review Release Date:** n/a  
**Review Release Event:** n/a  
**Review Transfer Date:**  
**Review Withdrawn Fields:** n/a  
**SAS ID:** 2024617  
**Secure:** OPEN  
**Status:** NATIVE  
**Subject:** ALLEGED YUGOSLAV TRANSFER OF M-47 TANKS TO ETHIOPIA-- WHY AND WHITHER  
**TAGS:** MASS, YO, ET, US  
**To:** STATE  
**Type:** TE  
**vdkgvwkey:** odbc://SAS/SAS.dbo.SAS\_Docs/72ba7e76-c288-dd11-92da-001cc4696bcc  
**Review Markings:**  
Margaret P. Grafeld  
Declassified/Released  
US Department of State  
EO Systematic Review  
22 May 2009  
**Markings:** Margaret P. Grafeld Declassified/Released US Department of State EO Systematic Review 22 May 2009